

## **BOARD FOR CONTRACTORS**

### **Tradesman Continuing Education**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

##### **Who must complete continuing education?**

Beginning January 1, 2008, all tradesmen must complete continuing education in order to renew their license. Tradesmen with the trade designation of plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and/or gas fitting must complete continuing education. The only exception is certified backflow prevention device workers, who are not currently required to complete continuing education for renewal.

##### **How much continuing education is required?**

Tradesman must complete continuing education as follows:

Plumbers: 3 hours

Electricians: 3 hours

HVAC workers: 3 hours

Gas Fitters: 1 hour (1 hour total for NGF, LPG, or GFC licenses)

Certified Elevator Mechanics: 8 hours \*

Certified Water Well Systems Providers: 8 hours \*

*\*Please note that this document covers frequently asked questions related to tradesman continuing education. Certified elevator mechanics and certified water well systems providers should contact the Licensing Staff at 804-367-8511 if they need information on continuing education requirements for their certificates/licenses.*

##### **How often must these continuing education hours be completed?**

All continuing education requirements must be fulfilled during the two year term of the license. If your license expires December 31, 2008, you must complete the required continuing education hours for your license before December 31, 2008. The next cycle for your license will be January 1, 2009, through December 31, 2010 (the next expiration date of your license), during which the continuing education requirements for your license must be fulfilled.

##### **What does the continuing education course have to cover?**

The continuing education course must be a code update course for the code that is specific to your trade. For example, electricians must complete a course covering updates to the National Electrical Code; plumbers must complete a course covering updates to the International Plumbing Code; HVAC workers must complete a course covering updates to the International Plumbing Code; and gas fitters must complete a course covering updates to the International Fuel Gas Code.

##### **Where can I find a course to take? Who offers the courses?**

The course must be completed through a Board-approved provider. A list of the Board-approved providers is located at [http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/dporweb/tra\\_approved\\_continuing\\_edu.pdf](http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/dporweb/tra_approved_continuing_edu.pdf). The

list is continuously updated as new providers are approved, so check back often to see if new providers in your area have been added to the list.

**I cannot find a course near me, or I am out-of-state. How can I complete the continuing education requirements?**

While the Board-Approved Provider List shows the location of each of the providers, that is not necessarily the location of the course. Some of the providers travel to various locations, while others offer their courses online or through correspondence courses. You would need to contact the individual providers to find out the location(s) of their courses. Online providers are denoted on the list as providing online courses. Also, if you have several months or more before your license expired, you may wish to wait to take the course because the list is continuously being updated as new providers are approved by the Board. By waiting a few months, you may find a provider has been approved that is closer to your area. The important thing is to complete the continuing education before your license expires.

**I have taken courses by a particular provider, but I do not see them on the list. Will the courses I take through that company/provider count towards my required continuing education?**

Only approved courses through approved providers will count towards the CE requirement. If you have a provider that you have taken courses through that you would like to see on the list, you should contact that provider and encourage them to apply for approval. The course must cover code updates, and the provider must meet the Board's requirements. The provider can contact the Board's education staff at 804-367-2224.

**Do I have to take a test as part of the continuing education requirement?**

Only correspondence and online providers must offer a test at the end of their courses. Providers who teach their courses in traditional classroom environments are not required to administer a test, but they may choose to do so as an assessment of understanding of course topics.

**Once I have taken the course, do I need to notify the Board office that I have completed the continuing education requirements for my license?**

All providers are required to electronically transmit rosters from each course to the Board office. This information is then transferred to your license record to document that the continuing education requirements have been completed. It is highly recommended that you keep some type of documentation from the course (i.e., a certificate of completion, if provided, or other type of proof) in case there are any questions regarding whether or not you completed the course requirements.

**I took the class last week, but when I called the Board office to make sure they received my continuing education information, I was told that they did not have the CE information on my record. Why?**

Providers have 7 days after the completion of the course to transmit the course roster. Once received, it takes several days to process the roster; therefore, it may be two to three weeks before we have record of your course. It is not recommended that you contact the Board office to check on the CE. Instead, keep the documentation referenced above and be prepared to submit it when you renew your license if you receive a letter from the Board office requesting proof of completion of the CE course.

**I have been an electrician/plumber/HVAC worker/gas fitter for 20 years. Is there a grandfather provision for me?**

There is no grandfather provision for continuing education. All tradesmen who wish to maintain their license must complete the continuing education requirements for their license.

**I have been working in this trade for so many years, why do I have to take continuing education now?**

The Board instituted mandatory continuing education in order to ensure that all tradesmen are up-to-date on code changes. While a number of tradesmen have independently taken courses to learn of changes to the code, many have not. By requiring continuing education of all tradesmen, the Board can continue to fulfill its mission of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public by making sure that tradesmen are aware of code changes, and can also help tradesmen by helping them to avoid inadvertently violating new code requirements that they may not have been aware of otherwise.

**My tradesman license has plumbing and gas fitting. Do I have to complete continuing education for both of them?**

Yes, if you have more than one designation on your license, you must complete continuing education for each designation.

**I have a journeyman and master tradesman license. Do I have to complete twice the continuing education?**

No. If you have, for example, a journeyman electrical and master electrical license, you only have to complete 3 hours of continuing education on the National Electrical Code. The same would apply to the other trades, with just one update course on the applicable code.

**I contacted several of the providers on the list and, even though only three hours on continuing education for my trade is required, they are offering classes that are 5, 10, or more hours long. Why?**

It is up to the provider how long the class they choose to offer is. Some providers choose to do a more extensive overview, or choose to include additional topics in their curriculum. The Board requires a minimum of 3 contact hours (or 1 hour for gas fitters), and only grants 3 credit hours (or 1 credit hour for gas fitters) regardless of how long the course is. It is completely your decision which class you choose to take.

**I contacted one of the providers, and they said that they do not offer classes to the public. Are they allowed to do that?**

Yes. Some providers choose to offer classes only to their employees or to members of a specific organization. Regardless of who they choose to offer the class to, they must meet the Board's requirements for the class.

**I contacted one of the providers and their phone was disconnected or it did not appear that they were any longer offering classes. What should I do?**

Please contact another provider on the list to find a provider who offers a course that you can take, but also please notify the Board office so that staff can attempt to contact the provider to determine whether or not they should be removed from the list. The Education Staff can be reached at 804-367-2224.

**What happens if I do not complete the continuing education?**

After January 1, 2008, your license will not be renewed if you do not complete the continuing education. The regular renewal and reinstatement regulations apply to fulfillment of the continuing education requirements. You have a 30-day grace period after the expiration date on your license to submit payment and proof of continuing education. Please note that this grace period is to allow extra time for completing the renewal requirements only; your license is still considered expired. If you do not complete both requirements within 30 days of the expiration date on your license, you must pay an additional fee to reinstate your license and complete the continuing education. If the fee and/or continuing education information are not submitted within one year, you must apply for a new license and meet then-current eligibility requirements.

**I have maintained my tradesman license even though I am retired. Is there a special status, such as inactive or retired, so that I can keep my license without completing continuing education?**

No. The Board does not have an “inactive” or “retired” status for its licenses. If you do not complete the requirements, you will be unable to renew your license.

**How can I contact the Board office?**

If you have a question regarding licensing issues, renewal, application status, etc., please contact the Licensing Staff at (804) 367-8511. If you have a question regarding continuing education providers, how to become a provider, or other questions relating to education, please contact the Education Staff at (804) 367-2224. You can always get applications, regulations, and other information from the Department’s website at [www.dpor.virginia.gov](http://www.dpor.virginia.gov).

You may also contact the Board via email at [contractors@dpor.virginia.gov](mailto:contractors@dpor.virginia.gov); fax at (804) 527-4401; or mail at:

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